

Claims

- [c1] 1. A method for treating in a human patient a non-malignant skin lesion that preferentially accumulates a photoactivatable porphyrin, comprising administering to said human patient in need thereof an effective amount of a precursor of protoporphyrin IX thereby accumulating therapeutic levels of said protoporphyrin IX, and thereafter exposing said skin lesion to light capable of photoactivating said protoporphyrin IX.
- [c2] 2. A method for detecting in a human patient a non-malignant skin lesion that preferentially accumulates a photoactivatable porphyrin, comprising administering to said human patient in need thereof an effective amount of a precursor of protoporphyrin IX thereby accumulating therapeutic levels of said protoporphyrin IX, and thereafter exposing said skin lesion to light capable of photoactivating said protoporphyrin IX.
- [c3] 3. The method of any of claims 1-2, wherein said precursor is administered topically.
- [c4] 4. The method of any of claims 1-2, wherein said precursor is 5-aminolevulinic acid.

- [c5] 5.A method of treating a non-malignant skin lesion in a human patient in which protoporphyrin IX is produced from 5-aminolevulinic acid, comprising exposing said skin lesion in said human patient to a wavelength of light within the photoactivating spectrum of protoporphyrin IX.
- [c6] 6.The method of any of claims 1-2 or 6, wherein said wavelength of light is 350-640 nm.
- [c7] 7.The method of any of claims 1-2 or 6, wherein said wavelength of light is 600-700 nm.
- [c8] 8.The method of any of claims 1-2 or 6, wherein said light is generated from an artificial light source.
- [c9] 9.The method of any of claims 1-2 or 6, wherein said light is only within the absorption spectrum of protoporphyrin IX.
- [c10] 10.The method of any of claims 1-2 or 6, wherein said photoactivating light is limited to the red and blue regions of the spectrum.
- [c11] 11.A photosensitizing treatment method for treating non-malignant lesions of the skin in a human patient comprising
 - (a)administering an agent which is not a photosensitizer

but induces the synthesis of protoporphyrin IX in vivo and then

(b) exposing the lesions of the skin to a wavelength of light within the photoactivating spectrum of protoporphyrin IX.

[c12] 12. The method of claim 11, wherein said agent induces synthesis of protoporphyrin IX in the heme biosynthetic pathway.

[c13] 13. The method of claim 11, wherein said agent is a precursor of protoporphyrin IX.

[c14] 14. The method of claim 11, wherein said wavelength of light is 350–640 nm.

[c15] 15. The method of claim 11, wherein said wavelength of light is 600–700 nm.

[c16] 16. The method of claim 11, wherein said agent is 5-amino levulinic acid.

[c17] 17. The method of claim 11, wherein said agent is administered topically.

[c18] 18. The method of claim 11, wherein said agent is administered systemically.

[c19] 19. The method of claim 11, wherein said light is gener-

ated from an artificial light source.

- [c20] 20. The method of claim 11, wherein said light is only within the absorption spectrum of protoporphyrin IX.
- [c21] 21. The method of claim 11, wherein said photoactivating light is limited to the red and blue regions of the spectrum.